



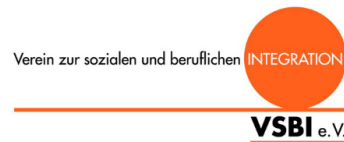
# Guideline

on collaboration between people with and without disabilities regarding independent and self-determined living



Co-funded by  
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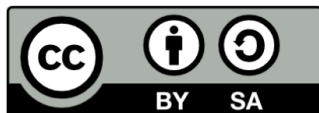
## A project by



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April I 2025



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KA210-ADU-EF718A5F

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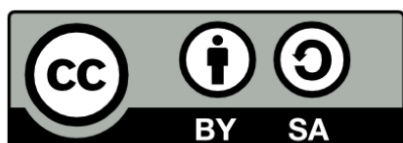


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KA210-ADU-EF718A5F

## Content

1 Introduction .....	1
2. The right to an independent and self-determined life.....	2
3 Accessibility .....	3
3.1 Universal Design .....	3
3.3 Accessible Communication .....	4
3.4 Easy and simple language .....	5
4 Cooperation between people with and without disabilities - organising a workshop.....	6
5 Collaboration with other stakeholders .....	14
6 Evaluation of the national Workshops.....	16
6.1 Workshops by People First/Hungary .....	16
6.2 Workshops by VSBI/Germany .....	17
6.3 Workshops by Fondazione Luigi Clerici/Italy .....	20
6.4 Workshops by Land of Hope/Slovakia (easy to understand) .....	22
7 Evaluation of the transnational project meetings.....	22
7.1 Evaluation by People First/Hungary .....	22
6.2 Evaluation by VSBI/Germany .....	23
7.3 Evaluation by Italy/Fondazione Luigi Clerici .....	25
7.4 Evaluation by Slovakia/Land of Hope .....	26
8 Ressources.....	28

## **1 Introduction**

As part of the international Erasmus+ project 'Indeed', the focus was on the exchange of knowledge and experience between four partner organisations from Hungary, Italy, Slovakia and Germany. All these organisations offer services for people with disabilities and are committed to self-determined living. The project promotes the right of people with disabilities to self-determination and inclusion in the community by facilitating the transnational exchange of best practices and concepts in the areas of disability, inclusion, self-determination and independent living.

The participating partner organisations had the opportunity to explore new paths and review their own approaches.

A central concern of the project was the active participation of people with disabilities. Self-determination processes were facilitated through discussions about their own needs and experiences.

Throughout the duration of the project, joint workshops were organized on site between people with disabilities and employees of the respective partner organizations. The aim of these workshops was to involve staff in supporting people with disabilities to lead a self-determined life. The workshop participants exchange their experiences and perspectives on self-determined living and prepare the topics for the international project meetings. The results of the knowledge exchange were collected in a publicly accessible online learning course on the Moodle platform. This course contains information on identified approaches, materials and methods, as well as interviews with people with disabilities who tell their own stories.

The project partners have also created this guideline for discussions on the topic of disability and independent living between different stakeholders, which is currently in front of you. Here you will find a theoretical background on self-determined and independent living, accessibility and working with stakeholders, as well as practical tips for implementing your own inclusive workshop. At the end of the guideline, all project partners present the results of their workshops and evaluate the international project meetings.

## 2. The right to an independent and self-determined life

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities came into force in May 2008. It concretises the general human rights to the situation of people with disabilities. This serves to protect people with disabilities from discrimination and marginalisation, which is still a problem. The UNCRPD has also established a human rights approach to disability. People with disabilities have all human rights. In turn, the state is obliged to respect, guarantee and protect these rights. Disabilities are seen as an enrichment of human diversity.

The UNCRPD contains various **principles** such as

- self-determination
- equal opportunities
- non-discrimination
- inclusion

As well as **obligations**

- Participation
- Awareness raising
- Accessibility

And **individual rights**

- Civil
- Political
- Economic
- Social
- Cultural Rights

The overarching goal of the UNCRPD is the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities (Deutsches Institut für Menschenrechte, n.d.).

The focus of the Indeed project is on independent living for people with disabilities. The legal basis for independent living is Art. 19 'Independent living and inclusion in the community' of the UNCRPD.

All people with disabilities - just like people without disabilities - have the right to live in and be part of the community. The signatory states to the UNCRPD (which also include Italy, Slovakia, Hungary and Germany) are obliged to guarantee this right. There are various aspects to independent living and inclusion in the community. People with disabilities have the right to freely choose their own place of residence and to decide where and with whom they live. No one can be obliged to live in a special form of accommodation (Art. 19 para. A UN CRPD).

In addition, all people with disabilities must have access to community-based support services at home and in institutions. This also includes personal assistance. This is necessary to support life and inclusion in the community. Personal assistance also serves to prevent isolation and segregation from the community (Art. 19 para. B UN CRPD).

General services and facilities that are available to all people should also be accessible to people with disabilities on an equal basis with others (Art. 19 para. C UN CRPD).

### **3 Accessibility**

To ensure that people with disabilities can lead an independent life and participate in all areas of life, the states parties to the UNCRPD must take measures to identify and remove obstacles and barriers to access (Art. 9 No. 1 UNCRPD). This includes public buildings (such as schools, medical facilities and workplaces), roads, public transport and residential buildings (Art. 9 No. 1 Para. A UNCRPD). Access to all services, such as information and communication services, as well as emergency services must also be guaranteed (Art. 9 No. 1 Para. B UNCRPD).

#### **3.1 Universal Design**

In order to lead an independent life, products, services and a person's environment must be accessible and usable (Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, n.d.).

One way of creating accessibility and promoting a self-determined life is the use of universal design (UNCRPD Art. 4 Para. F; Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, n.d.).

In universal design, products and the environment are designed in such a way that they can be used by all people, so that adaptation or specialisation is not necessary. Universal design follows seven principles:

1. **Equitable use:** the product or environment can be used by all people - regardless of their abilities.

2. **Flexibility in use:** the product or environment can be used by many people with different preferences and abilities.
3. **Simple and intuitive use:** the use of the product or environment is easy to understand. Regardless of a person's experience, knowledge, language skills and ability to concentrate, the design should be usable by all people.
4. **Perceptible information:** The product or environment conveys all important information to people. The environmental conditions and sensory abilities are irrelevant.
5. **Tolerance for error:** The product or environment helps to prevent hazards and negative consequences caused by unintentional actions.
6. **Low physical effort:** the product or environment can be used efficiently without the need for special physical effort.
7. **Size and space for approach and use:** The product should be of an appropriate size. There must also be enough space to reach and use the object. This should be independent of the user's height, posture and mobility (NC State University, n.d.).

### 3.3 Accessible Communication

Accessible communication is required to ensure that everyone can take part in a workshop. Accessible communication comprises various elements. These include clear and simple language (see chapter 3.4). The use of images, pictograms and infographics serves as visual support (WORTLIGA, 2024). The Arasaac website provides free pictograms that can be helpful for the development of barrier-free workshops. With the help of the search function, a large number of relevant terms can be found as pictograms. The website is available in English, German, Italian, Slovakian and Hungarian. The website can be accessed via the following link: <https://arasaac.org/>. The provision of information in alternative formats such as Braille, sign language or audio output devices can also contribute to accessibility. A clear layout of texts with a clear structure and contrasts contributes to an accessible structure and layout (see also chapter 3.4).

To make information more accessible, it should always be communicated via at least two senses (two-senses principle). This means, for example, that acoustic information should also be presented visually. In addition to the spoken word, there are also written recordings that represent the content (WORTLIGA, 2024).



### 3.4 Easy and simple language

To ensure that all participants in a workshop can understand its content, attention must be paid to the type of language used.

This is why there is easy language and simple language. But what exactly is easy language, and how does it differ from simple language?

Easy language is primarily used for people with learning difficulties or cognitive disabilities. Simple language, on the other hand, is intended for people with reading difficulties, reading and writing difficulties or non-native speakers (Die Sprachprofis, n.d.).

Simple Language is orientated towards language level B1, while easy language is more in the A1 to A2 range. Simple language is comparable to the language used in everyday life. The texts are generally more fluent and easier to read. In addition, they are more clearly structured, and clearer and generally used terms are used (capito, n.d.). There are no fixed rules for simple language, but there are recommendations (Die Sprachprofis, n.d.).

Easy language, on the other hand, follows a fixed set of rules. It must also be checked by people with learning difficulties. Only when the reviewers find the texts comprehensible may the term 'easy language' be used (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, 2022).

Even though easy language was developed specifically for people with learning difficulties, other groups of people can also benefit from it (capito, n.d.). These include - just as with simple language - people with reading and writing difficulties or people whose native language is different from the national language (Netzwerk Leichte Sprache, 2022).

Although easy language may only be used after it has been checked by experts, the rules can still be helpful for the development of workshops. Here are some tips from the rules for easy language (Netzwerk Leichte Sprache, 2022).

#### Words

- Use of simple and short words
- Avoiding technical and foreign words
- Avoid idioms and figurative language (as these can be taken literally by people)
- Long words can be separated with hyphens

## **Numbers and characters**

- No use of Roman numerals
- Avoid old years, high numbers or percentages; instead: a long time ago, many people, etc.
- Use the number and not the word (4 instead of four)
- Do not use special characters (such as % or &)

## **Sentences**

- Use of short sentences with a simple sentence structure
- Separation of long sentences into several short sentences

## **Texts**

- Address the reader directly
- Do not ask questions (this can be confusing)
- Avoid references to other texts

## **Design of the texts**

- Use simple fonts that are easy to read (e.g. Calibri, Verdana or Open Sans)
- Use a large font (14 or larger)
- Sufficient line spacing
- Use headings and paragraphs
- Important things should be emphasised (highlight in bold, underline)
- Use images (must match the text)

## **4 Cooperation between people with and without disabilities - organising a workshop**

In this chapter you will find practical tips for implementing an inclusive workshop

**A short workshop (from 45 to 90 minutes)** is a single educational program.

It is prepared to introduce to participants  
practical skills, techniques, or ideas  
which they can then use in their daily lives.

It could be a cycle of different workshops  
to master the picked topics.



## BASIC RULES TO ORGANIZE A WORKSHOP

### 1

#### Create the group you want to work with

- **diversity is the best choice**

People with and without disability working together.



- **consider the workshop size**

Ask how many people will take part.

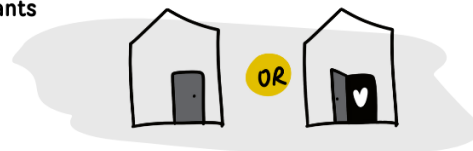
- **small group of 7-14 pax is optimal for discussion**

Allowing everyone some personal attention  
and the chance to be heard.



- **decide if the group will be closed or open for new participants**

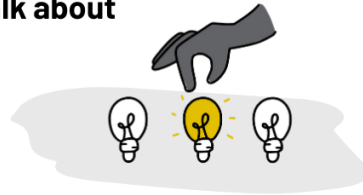
A workshop can help to create a sense of community  
or common purpose among its participants.



## 2

### Ask people about the topics they want to talk about to make their lives better

- consider and pick your topics



- find who will lead the workshops

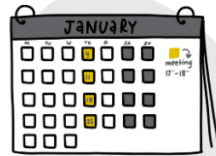
The best are people who have real experiences in the topics discussed.  
Co-leaders or co-facilitators can greatly expand the possibilities.



## 3

### Plan of the meetings

- plan the number of sessions



- regular time is optimal



- consider and set times available for all

- plan the time to introduce and connect

The opportunity to get to know others and exchange ideas is one of the central values for many people plan the time to talk.



- plan breaks – allow plenty of breaks

Both because of the need to stretch and use the bathroom and because of attention span.



- plan, which supporting material will you need (paper, markers, etc.)



- **the optimal duration is between 45 – 60 minutes**
- **think about the possibility of refreshments**  
Often small variety of drink choices (water, coffee, tea)  
and some little snack helps to loosen the clime.



## 4 Use easy to understand language

- **make the workshop accessible to understand for all participants**  
Easy-to-read charts, pictures and graphs are helpful for a lot of people.
- **combination with pictures is the best for all**



Summary, bullet points, and the use of colour or pictures helps.

- **vary activities**  
For example: to present, to discuss, to paint, to play theatre etc.



- **people learn things in different ways**  
Make it accessible and participatory.  
Participants are active, they influence the direction of the workshop.  
They have a chance to practice the techniques and skills discussed.



- **make it informal**  
A part of discussion in addition to participation,  
rather than just a lector presenting material to be absorbed by students.



- **make it self-contained**

The workshop may end with a toolkit and suggestions for further reading or study or those who are interested.



- **make up an evaluation form**

People can fill it out quickly at the end of the workshop, but that covers the areas you really want to know about.



## 5 Share the results and ideas to inspire others

- **make a short report about the results of each workshop**

Restate the significant points that the workshop covered and revisit the agenda to identify any areas you didn't get the chance to.



- **share it with other people**

Participants can present it to peers, friends, researchers, stakeholders, ...

- **use social media**

More people can be inspired.



- **use pictures**

That makes the messages and statements stronger.

- **use ideas**

Some people can see them or new ones and support you.



# 6

## Try to implement easier steps to the real life

- encourage participants to relate the workshop content to their reality
- small steps are the most important in the beginning
- the second step will come naturally



# 7

## What more can help and support the inclusive preparation of workshops

### ● accessibility

Ensure the workshop venue is wheelchair accessible and has facilities like ramps and elevators.

Provide materials in multiple formats (print, electronic, large print) to accommodate diverse needs.



### ● flexibility and adaptability

Be flexible with schedules and breaks to accommodate the diverse needs of participants.

Have alternative activities or materials ready in case someone needs an adjustment.



### ● **respect individual abilities**

Acknowledge and respect the different abilities and strengths of each participant.

Avoid making assumptions about what individuals can or cannot do based on their disabilities.



### ● **provide options**

Offer a variety of ways for participants to express themselves, whether it's through spoken words, writing, or other means.

Ensure that tools and equipment are adaptable to different needs.



### ● **sensory considerations**

Be mindful of sensory sensitivities and provide a quiet space or sensory-friendly tools if needed.

Avoid strong scents or loud noises that may be disruptive.



### ● **encourage peer support**

Foster a supportive environment where participants can assist each other.

Encourage open communication among participants to share experiences and insights.





● **accessible technology**

Ensure that any technology used is accessible,  
including screen readers  
or captioning for presentations.

Test technology in advance to address potential issues.



● **trained facilitators**

Equip facilitators with training on inclusivity  
and disability awareness.

Facilitators should be prepared to offer assistance  
when needed without being intrusive.



These guidelines aim to create an environment  
where all participants feel comfortable,  
valued,  
and able to fully engage in the workshop.



## 5 Collaboration with other stakeholders

In order to achieve a specific goal together, collaboration with stakeholders is essential. This is a process in which organisations or projects collaborate with individuals or groups who have an interest in them. A distinction is made between internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders are individuals and groups within the organisation itself. External stakeholders are partners, clients and communities outside the organisation (Hughes, 2023).

*But why is collaboration with stakeholders relevant?*

Collaboration with stakeholders has many advantages. By involving stakeholders in the decision-making process, they are empowered at the same time. They can also help with decision-making and provide a form of support - this can create sustainable change. Beneficial relationships can be built and fostered for both sides - stakeholders and the organisation. Through collaboration, important issues that have previously received less attention can be uncovered. Above all, the involvement of stakeholder groups, which could tend to make work more difficult, as supporters increase an organisation's chances of success.

Stakeholders can also contribute to education and serve as a valuable source of information - and at the same time learn something from the organisation (Hendricks, n.d.).

*Successful collaboration*

To ensure successful collaboration with stakeholders, several aspects should be considered. It is important to ask for comments from the stakeholder group and include them in the decision-making process. From the outset, expectations should be communicated and agreements made about future work. As the project progresses, stakeholders should be kept informed and involved. To achieve the best possible result, feedback must be taken into account (Hughes, 2023).

*Strategic approach*

To find suitable stakeholders, the following questions should be asked first:

- What should be achieved through the collaboration with the stakeholders?
- Which stakeholders are suitable for achieving the goal?
- How can the stakeholder information be utilised?

- How can the stakeholders be reached in order to propose cooperation?

#### *Identify and analyse the stakeholders*

- What are the expectations, needs and roles of the stakeholders?  
 ➔ A thorough assessment of the interests, influence and impact of all possible stakeholders helps to decide whom to work with. It can be useful to create a list of all stakeholders, in which important information and contact details can be found.

#### *Identify opportunities to be involved*

Stakeholders should have the opportunity to be involved in the project, e.g. through:

- Joint workshops, interviews or focus groups
- Participation in meetings and events
- Registration on the project website
- Feedback through surveys, emails or phone calls

It should always be ensured that only those people who are relevant to the project are involved in individual areas and decisions (Hendricks, n.d.).

#### *Keep people up to date*

During a project, it is important to regularly provide stakeholders with new information and progress on the project. The regularity of the updates depends on the phase of the project and can be monthly, fortnightly or weekly (in particularly active project phases, updates can also be more frequent). Various information channels such as post, letters, text messages or social media can be used (Hendricks, n.d.).

#### *Dealing with complaints*

In order to counteract dissatisfaction, regular feedback from stakeholders is essential. Complaints should be taken seriously and resolved as quickly as possible (Hendricks, n.d.).

#### *Building trust*

For successful collaboration with stakeholders, a trusting relationship must be established with them. To achieve this, organisations should demonstrate integrity, honesty, commitment and consistency and communicate effectively with stakeholders (Hendricks, n.d.).

### *Regular reports*

Regular project reports are a good opportunity to show stakeholders their participation in the project and its results. These reports are especially important for stakeholders who have a high level of influence on the project through close collaboration (Hendricks, n.d.).

## **6 Evaluation of the national Workshops**

In this chapter you can read about the national workshops that each partner did. But you can get some inspiration to create your own inclusive workshops.

### **6.1 Workshops by People First/Hungary**

One **workshop was held on 11.02.2025**, to which all parties interested in the development of independent living were invited. During the organisation, there was not much hope that staff/managers of institutions would accept our invitation. They did not respond; they did not react. So, on the day of the workshop, we were surprised to see that staff from several large institutions came and actively participated in the discussion. There were representatives/leaders from the University of Pécs, the Kerek Világ Foundation (they run a small institution), and a large institution with hundreds of people, run by Baptists.

The workshop was an unexpected success, not only in the number of participants but also in its intensity. It was a very active, lively and interactive discussion, which was very inspiring for the participants. Such a meeting of all sides involved in independent living (people with disabilities, family members/carers, innovative-thinking staff in institutions) had never been held in Pécs before.

During the meeting, after an introduction, we presented the Indeed project. Then, in an active discussion, we explored what self-determination means to each of us. We identified some topics for orientation and recorded ideas and opinions on a flipchart. We used the break to get to know each other and have small talk. Then we chose two topics from the flipchart board related to self-determination, which we analysed in more depth. The two chosen topics were the following:

- Separation from parents. How far should the helper's help extend?
- Independent housing.

- We have analysed these issues along the following dimensions:
- How can these issues/problems be solved?
- How can we actively participate in the solution?
- What is my approach?
- How can my attitude be improved?
- What can I not participate in, what can I participate in?
- How? What is my plan for the near future?
- Collecting good practices to help others.
- We also considered it important to evaluate who gets what from the workshop and what they take home?

The posters attached show the responses collected.

There was a clear need to continue the workshop, and the participants expressed their wish to have similar discussions in the same circle on a regular basis.

The **multiplier event was held on 18.03.2025**. The workshop participants were invited, and we extended the invitation to the press and local decision-makers. The press included online and paper newspapers and local TV. On the part of the local government, the civil councillor was present. Representatives of the press and local government actively participated in the discussion throughout.

The Indeed project was also presented at the multiplier event, as well as the main lessons learnt from the personal meetings of the participating countries.

Two topics were moved from the previous workshop. We discussed the surprising proposition raised there that segregated teaching/education still has legitimacy today. A very lively, useful and surprising debate ensued - in a moderated format. The result was that although segregated thinking has moved beyond the times, there is still a place for some form of segregation in today's inclusive society.

## **6.2 Workshops by VSBI/Germany**

We organized three workshops as part of the project. These took place every two weeks and lasted three hours each. Both VSBI employees and people with disabilities took part as experts on their own behalf.

At our first workshop, we first collected the topics that we were interested in and that we would like to discuss at the upcoming workshops:

- Education
- Information about your own rights
- Self-representation/management
- Attitudes and attitudes of organisations, professional service providers, administrations and society
- universal design (design for all) in public spaces

We then discussed what self-determination means to us and what constitutes a self-determined life. We recorded our findings on a flip chart.

- Knowing what you want
- Knowing your own limits
- Being allowed to make mistakes in a self-determined way
- Being able to decide for yourself what you do, when, how, where and with whom
- Not being forced to live in a particular type of accommodation; free to decide where to live and with whom
- Self-determined social life and leisure time
- Not being told what to do
- Free choice of profession
- A self-determined lifestyle (religion, sexuality, diet, etc.)

The second workshop focused on education, information and clarification, as well as self-representation and self-administration.

How should education be organised? What should people learn in order to lead a self-determined life?

- Participatory education
- Accessibility and the right didactics for access to education
- Target group-orientated and needs-based education
- Sensitisation
- Civic education for all

- Enabling points of contact
- More inclusive education programmes (currently: lack of inclusive education on offer)
- Education for institutions and society regarding the self-determination of people with disabilities
- Trusting people to do things → Experts in their own lives

What do self-representation and self-administration mean?

- Filling out applications independently and self-determinedly
- Giving a voice to people who have no voice
- Mistakes are allowed and must be tolerated

What influences people's commitment to representing themselves or not representing themselves? What makes self-advocacy more difficult?

- People tilting at windmills
- Prevention of self-representation by other people
- People are not taken seriously
- No knowledge of what counts as self-representation
- Difficulties in cooperating with institutions, organisations, authorities, etc.
- Obstacles from legal carers, institutions, etc.
- Attitudes of the authorities (knowledge of one's own rights is exhausting for other people)

What could motivate more people to represent themselves and get involved?

- Real accessibility
- Volunteer assistance
- Public relations work
  - What can you do to represent yourself?
  - How does self-advocacy work?
  - What are your own rights?
- Your own attitude is the basis

The third workshop was dedicated to the topics of attitudes and behavior in society and universal design.

What kind of attitudes and behaviors do people with disabilities or people who work with people with disabilities encounter?

- 'I couldn't do that...'
- 'No fish, no fowl' → Not really disabled, but not really non-disabled either
- Discrimination based on a visible and/or invisible disability
- Regular 'outing': justifying what you can or cannot do

How can we change society's attitudes and behaviour?

- Strengthen and empower all children from an early age
- Create real, authentic encounters
- Prove the opposite → Show what you can do

Design for all/universal design

- Has received too little attention so far
- There are different levels: architectural, structural, content-related
- Think before you act/build
- Ask people what they need = end-user orientation
- Make contact persons visible = who can you turn to?
- Education and information = inclusive, usable and accessible (according to Burgstahler, 2021)

All in all the workshops were very interesting and we discussed a lot different but equally important topics. It got clear that there is a lot of things that need to be changed in Germany to ensure an independent and self-determined life for everyone.

### **6.3 Workshops by Fondazione Luigi Clerici/Italy**

Three local workshops were organized in Italy, involving not only the two participants of the transnational workshops but their entire class, which included students without disabilities, students with certified disabilities, and students with learning disabilities. The decision to work with the whole class was made due to significant bullying issues and due to the fact that the two participants who have also participated in the transnational workshop in Erfurt had claimed that such workshops would be very important for them since school does not



adequately prepare them for real-life situations such as living independently, paying bills, and developing social skills.

Each workshop focused on a specific topic:

1. First Workshop: Inequality

- The students discussed how they experience inequality in their lives. They were asked to think about their strengths and weaknesses and to choose a strong and a weak person they know. They then used the DIXIT board game, selecting cards that represented strength and weakness and explaining their choices.

2. Second Workshop: Global inequality

- The students reflected on inequality around the world and discussed the inequalities they experience personally. They also studied and talked about Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

3. Third Workshop: Anger and fear

- This workshop focused on the emotions of anger and fear, emotions which had emerged from the previous workshops.
- The first part of the workshop focused on anger. Students created posters depicting things that provoked their anger. They explained that anger provokes almost all of them to have a physical reaction. Therefore, they were asked to express their initial physical reactions in ripping, stamping on, or scribbling on the posters. They then had to glue the pieces back together and find socially acceptable ways to express their anger, writing these methods on the back of the posters.
- Regarding fear, students wrote their fears on a large poster and then used straws to blow paint over them. The message from the teachers was that everyone shares similar fears, and the best way to overcome them is to have support from others.

These workshops had a huge positive impact on the students: we all get angry, we have the same fears, we all live inequalities with all strengths and weaknesses.

#### **6.4 Workshops by Land of Hope/Slovakia (easy to understand)**

- We were glad to meet all teams and sharing together
- It was a fun the same time
- We remained us equal rights for all people
- All information supposes be easy read
- We learn the activities how to involve all participants
- We learned to make own decisions
- We spoke what we want in our life
- We learn how to do it
- We spoke about own responsibility
- We met new people and gain new experiences
- We found new view for new solutions
- We listened each other how we can have a better quality of life in the community
- Nobody wanted to live in the institution

### **7 Evaluation of the transnational project meetings**

In the following you can about an evaluation that we did at our last transnational meeting in Milan. Each partner collected ideas and inspiration they got from the other meetings and partners. We also discussed which approaches and ideas we would like to implement in our own country as well.

#### **7.1 Evaluation by People First/Hungary**

In each of these personal meetings, it was particularly important that people with disabilities themselves participated. As they shared their own views and presented local projects, the principle of "Nothing about us without us" was fully implemented. It was the first time we were able to experience this in an Erasmus+ international project.

In addition, the friendly atmosphere of the personal meetings was very important for partnership building. We believe that partnership building is a key element of an Erasmus+ project, if this is not realised at the beginning of the project, the project and its social purpose/social impact can clearly not be successful.

The biggest realisation for us at the meeting in **Erfurt /Germany**, was how similar the Slovak and Hungarian systems and social attitudes are. It was very enlightening to learn from the Slovak grassroots approach, which showed us that it is worth starting this way in Hungary too, without waiting for government initiatives. The persistent, multi-stakeholder German work

was also instructive (cooperation between various NGOs and public institutions). The only thing we missed at the Erfurt meeting was a professional study tour and presentations were a bit “dry” (too much factual data, legal issues).

The meeting in **Slovakia /Zilina** was the most warmly welcomed, which made it easy to cooperate and contribute. It was great to meet people who have serious care needs and who are able to communicate without words. An important lesson was that in Slovakia all architects work according to the universal design; there is no need for a specific training of this sort. It was also important to hear that there has been a personal assistance law since 1998, as a grassroots initiative, driven by NGOs. This is what we need to do in Hungary. The Jolly Festival has a fantastic community-building power! Only one problem was apparent at the personal meeting: the venue was not accessible.

At the TPM in **Milan/ Italy**, we focused on just one issue: an inclusive vocational school. We came across some very good ideas (e.g. personalised learning plan, internship system, no supportive tutors, but all teachers are inclusive tutors). It was strange to hear about how much influence parents have on children and that children don't really have any independent decision power. What we missed was the lack of team-building opportunities and the lack of opportunities to comment and discuss. Throughout the project, we would have liked to learn much more and in many different ways about Italian independent living methods and opportunities.

## **6.2 Evaluation by VSBI/Germany**

### **Meeting in Slovakia**

In Slovakia, we learnt a lot about the personal budget and assistance for people with disabilities. It was particularly interesting to learn that the legal basis for this is based on the work of Adolf Ratzka. Assistance in Slovakia is implemented exclusively by volunteers who work as assistants in addition to their regular jobs. We were very impressed by the way Land of Hope networks and recruits volunteers. In particular, the ‘Jolly Festival’ - an inclusive arts festival - is used to recruit people for voluntary work. We will definitely adopt this commitment and the dedication of Land of Hope for our work.

Land of Hope has managed to enable many people with disabilities to find a job in the primary labour market and lead a self-determined and independent life. This is particularly remarkable

in view of the lack of support from the government. In view of the current political situation in Germany, we can take an example from Land of Hope regarding the implementation of awareness for and the importance of inclusion.

The cooperation and partnership between Land of Hope and the blue butterflies - a self-help organisation responsible for personal assistance - was also very interesting for us and an approach we would like to adopt.

We can imagine job shadowing with assistants from Slovakia for future projects.

### **Meeting in Hungary**

We were very impressed by the work of People First as a self-advocacy organisation in Hungary. People First have managed to establish a self-advocacy organisation for people with various disabilities - and not an organisation for one type of disability. In Germany, there is still a kind of segregation within self-advocacy organisations. A common organisation for all people with all types of disabilities would be a desirable goal for Germany.

People First has an enormous impact on the local economy, civil society and the entire city of Pécs. Above all, strengthening our civil society is a worthwhile goal for our work.

In Hungary, personal assistance is organised and implemented without any kind of legal basis. It is made possible solely through the efforts of volunteers and family members. We were very impressed by this.

People First has also developed various business models, such as the Hidden City Tour through Pécs or a database listing accessible shops in Pécs. All the locations were tested by People First and given a sticker certifying their accessibility. We would like to realise this interesting project in German cities as well.

In the future, we would like to do job shadowing with People First to learn from their expertise and innovative solutions.

### **Meeting in Italy**

The implementation of diversity in a company as part of McDonald's 'Tiki Taka' project was particularly interesting for us. This involves companies, students with disabilities and their

families gathering at a round table to discuss how they can implement more inclusion and diversity in the company. We would like to adapt a similar approach in Germany.

Fondazione Luigi Clerici told us about the personalised vocational training courses for their students. We noticed that it is only a matter of personalisation, but not of person-centricity. Although the competences of the students are primarily considered, they are then divided into the respective classes according to their competences - something that does not correspond to our understanding of inclusion and is strongly reminiscent of the German special school system. We would have been interested to learn more about Fondazione Luigi Clerici's understanding of inclusion, as it seemed more like integration than inclusion to us.

Another interesting topic was the work of the social cooperatives that exist in Italy. These reminded us of a little of the parents' initiatives that later became large organisations for people with disabilities. We would have liked to learn more about this topic and will definitely find out more about it (especially about the values and principles of the cooperatives). For our own work, we would like to establish social cooperatives of employees that offer more opportunities for self-management and self-determination.

### **7.3 Evaluation by Italy/Fondazione Luigi Clerici**

#### **Workshop in Germany**

The workshops were found very interesting and were therefore replicated in Italy with the whole class. It was very interesting to see persons with disabilities helping other persons with disabilities in creating social housing.

#### **Workshop in Slovakia**

Accessible train stations in Zilina could be replicated in little towns and villages. There are some special architectural features which could be replicated. Some of our VET center could be more accessible. There are similar problems with regard to supporting teachers: they are not prepared, they are asked to take students with disabilities out of the classroom, and educational staff are underpaid.

#### **Workshop in Hungary**

The Inclusion Festival can be replicated in Italy.

## Workshop in Italy

Sheltered workshops in Germany are different from the ones in Italy. There are no personalized training courses for people with disabilities in the other three countries.

### 7.4 Evaluation by Slovakia/Land of Hope

It was very important for us to meet partner organizations and to share the situation we deal with according to the independent living of persons with disabilities.

From our partner from **Germany**, we learnt how important it is to be active in social-political life and how to support persons with disabilities to participate in the political area. We are inspired to support preparation for a self-advocacy group to develop communication skills and to provide advisory tasks by their personal experience. We wish our colleagues from VSBI to support social inclusion into regular community life in the places people with disabilities are living. It is supportive to find many volunteers from neighbours, students and other organizations and cooperate with them to make support stronger and relationships richer.

From our partner in **Hungary**, we learnt a lot about the participatory budget in Pécs and about cooperation according to the support for students with disabilities at university. We liked the strong network of the organizations in the town Pécs, and we would like to do it also in Žilina. We thought about accessibility rules and how universal design is the first and the best choice for all citizens. We wish People First organization to find many more opportunities for people with disabilities to have employment in the open labour market. We wish all Hungarian NGOs to have a strong voice and to be listened to.

From our partner in **Italy**, we learnt more about the process of preparation and training for work in the open labour market and all the different tools used to support the employment of people with disabilities. We admire the cooperation with different companies, and we visited some of them. We liked also the acceptance of people with disabilities in the communities as part of it. We will develop more of the revision of accessibility in our town regularly; we will cooperate more intensively with more companies to support the employment of people with disabilities in the open labour market. We will support the process of transition from school to work with cooperation with other partners in our town. What we wish for students at the schools of Fondazione Luigi Clerici is to be more independent and be more respected by teachers and parents. We would like to support their self-esteem and their own opinion

according to their own lives. They could be brave to overcome limits and to use opportunities not according to the disability but according to their dreams.

From the experiences we learnt during this project, it is clear that the lives of persons with disabilities in the institution are not able to develop there. Only life in normal communities can provide the opportunities to be active, useful, and respected as a citizen for a person with a disability. That's why we will continue to provide support to persons with disabilities this way.

## 8 Ressources

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## **Annex Workshops results**